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CYRUS WOODMAN: A CHARACTER SKETCH

ELLIS B. USHER

A biography and study of the personality, character, career, and antecedents of Cyrus Woodman are worth while because, although as a neighbor and resident of the state he lived in the West for only sixteen years, he was nevertheless identified with some of its most interesting history, and established relations and interests here that continued throughout his well-rounded life. And because it is especially fitting that such an estimate of Mr. Woodman should be prepared for and deposited with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, I have undertaken this sketch.

The history of the state is the mosaic of accomplishment by its individual citizens; it is a misfortune that so many men of great usefulness leave so little personal record behind them. Mr. Woodman illustrates the importance of the useful private citizen and it is a matter for congratulation that he has left unusual records of his relations to Wisconsin and northern Illinois, and that his children have placed these records in the keeping of our State Historical Society.¹ The fact that Mr. Woodman was one of the charter members of this Society, and, as his correspondence shows, was also one of the earliest² and most persistent advocates of such a society, suggested to his children the propriety of this repository for most of his personal records. They knew that he had served long as one of the Society's vice presidents, and they were themselves natives of the region to which these papers chiefly refer.³

¹ There are nearly two hundred bound volumes of his personal and business correspondence in the Society's keeping. See *WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY*, Dec. 1918, 233-34.

² I am quite sure that he once told me, in reply to questions, that he made the first suggestion to General Smith and helped, later, in his quiet way, to push the undertaking to success.

³ Two of his children were born in Winslow, Illinois, and four in Mineral Point, Wisconsin.

To interpret a man's character and value to his neighbors and his time is an undertaking that no one should essay without misgivings. It is, therefore, well for me to say, frankly, that the fact that I am the nephew of Cyrus Woodman, and that he was more than an uncle to me—he was my friend and benefactor—lays certain awkward limitations upon this effort to translate him to his permanent and proper place in Wisconsin and western local history. I shall, therefore, let others speak for him, and permit him to speak for himself as far as possible. The latter method would not be to his liking, if he might intervene, but it will be more just and more illuminating.

Writing to me recently of the death of Mr. Woodman's eldest son in Charleston, West Virginia, Superintendent Quaife says:

"I judge that Mr. Woodman inherited, or had instilled in him, most of the admirable traits of his father. I note particularly the comment concerning the solidity of his scholarship, and the modesty of his character. Such men are all too rare in any country, or in any age. Without implying anything to the discredit of our own age and country, I think it was a God-send to youthful Wisconsin that we had Cyrus Woodman in our midst for a time. Evidently Charleston has profited in somewhat similar fashion by the presence of his son."

Mr. Woodman had an innate taste for history and many of the characteristics of the careful historian, so it was not surprising that as a young man fresh from Bowdoin College, Harvard Law School, and the practice of law in Boston, he should be interested in the scenes and inspired by the great possibilities of the robust, boundless new West into which he entered when, on January 14, 1840, he arrived in Winslow, Illinois. He came as the agent of the Boston and Western Land Company. Later the company was dissolved, and he purchased the remaining lands, mainly on credit, in 1843, and began business on his own account.

In the summer of 1844 he formed a partnership with Cadwallader Colden Washburn, also a native of Maine, a

lawyer, and already established in Mineral Point.⁴ This was the beginning of a lifelong association and confidence between these two men, for, although they separated their business interests in 1855, they were often closely associated in large business transactions in later life. Mr. Washburn enjoyed great undertakings, and my uncle said to me, after the explosion of the Washburn flour mills at Minneapolis, that he would not bear such a load as General Washburn always carried "for all his money."

This remark illustrates one of Mr. Woodman's characteristics. He had a competence when he dissolved partnership with Mr. Washburn. When the latter was elected to Congress it was his wish that the partnership might continue, Mr. Woodman conducting the business. This was more of a responsibility than Mr. Woodman cared for, so in the division of the property he took his share very largely in cash, and gave Mr. Washburn what both considered the major share—a prospective great fortune, principally in wild lands and pine stumpage. A letter to Mr. Washburn written from Bonn, Prussia, in 1857, clearly illustrates Mr. Woodman's measure of his friend and former associate. He writes:

"Though you talk of drawing your business to a close, yet I have no doubt that if you could cash your lumber this winter you would, before the Mississippi opens next spring, be making your calculations to buy out and cut down all the timber on the Black, Chippewa and Rum rivers, and perhaps be in favor of starting a gigantic joint stock company to cut down all the pine in Oregon the year following."⁵

Mr. Woodman, although then but forty-one years of age, retired from active business and as soon as he could adjust his affairs took his family to Europe for three years, educating his children in Germany and France, and studying himself at Bonn and with private tutors. He set aside \$10,000 for this season abroad and, I believe, made it fulfill his purpose.

⁴ Later a representative in Congress, major general of volunteers in the Civil War, and governor of Wisconsin.

⁵ Records in the Woodman papers show that Mr. Washburn had serious ideas of a great lumbering corporation.

In my possession are a number of his letters to Mr. Washburn, written during these years. They were composed with leisure and in the full frankness and sincerity of personal confidence and security. They therefore measure better than anyone else possibly could the wide range of Mr. Woodman's intelligence, his interest in and careful study of the governments and peoples visited in his travels, and his discriminating estimates and decided and independent opinions upon the larger public questions under discussion at home. On the twenty-second of November, 1857, nearly sixty-two years ago, he wrote from Bonn to Mr. Washburn as follows:

"The English have retaken Delhi. I merely mention it to say that I am glad of it. England and the United States are the only two free countries in the world worth naming. England with her free speech and free press is hated and feared by all European governments, notwithstanding all professions to the contrary.

"In Europe generally the laws and the police for protection of life and property are much more effectual than with us. Our liberty, in the states, especially in the new states, borders upon license, and not infrequently license drives liberty to the wall. But after all I would rather live in the wildest and rudest part of the Union where freedom of speech and of the press is unrestricted, (this excludes some of the slave districts where neither are allowed in relation to the 'peculiar institution,' slavery) and where I might be obliged to protect my person and property with bowie knives and pistols, than to dwell in this land where one dares not utter his thoughts upon government or religion. Freedom of speech and of the press is essential to the development of a manly people. It is for this reason that the inhabitants of England and the United States are the most manly upon the earth.

"I look with pride upon the extension of English speech and English liberty over so broad a portion of the earth's surface.

"Here in Prussia more than twenty people cannot hold a meeting without permission of the authorities and if in a public place you speak with a German upon politics and religion he will not utter his thoughts without first looking round to see that he is not overheard. What effect this has upon the national character you can well imagine."

In a letter to his sister a month later, and in similar vein, I find the following extract which is prophetic, in the light of recent events:

"In Europe England is envied, feared, and consequently hated. I for one, am not envious of England's prosperity and greatness. I see in her, advance of order, intelligence and civil liberty. She is the natural

ally of the United States, and if, at some future day the nations of Europe shall combine against her, I hope she will receive all the support from the United States which they can constitutionally give."

These quotations justify his rejoinder to Judge Drummond, a friend of his school days, when the Judge cautioned him, as he was starting for Europe, not to forget his country—"I am too good a Democrat to do so." His democracy, as his letters from Bonn show, was broad and statesmanlike, transcending party limitations.

He came from the element in New England that revolted against the civil domination of the Congregational Church, because it was, in turn, dominated by or expressed itself through the Federalist party. Maine was, in that movement, an exemplar of Professor Frederick J. Turner's idea that "the frontier" is a social and not a geographical condition. Anti-Federalism was deeply bedded in his political principles, although he was named for a Federalist, Cyrus King, who was representative in Congress from the district in which he was born.⁶ He once denounced to me the "American Statesmen" series of biographies, because they were written by Charles Francis Adams, Henry Cabot Lodge, and others, under the inherited spell of Federalism. But his politics, although he and his father before him were Democrats, were not measured by mere partisanship, as is demonstrated by the following quotation from a letter to Mr. Washburn, written in Bremen in 1856:

"I have no doubt of your reelection, but I do not share your confidence in regard to the election of Fremont. I, of course, have not the grounds for an opinion that you have, but I believe that he will be defeated, for that seems to be the fate of the North, and this election resolves itself into a question between the North and South. The contest is a sectional one. Let it be so! I am content now to accept the issue which must one day be made and to fight the battle which must one day be fought. The question now is whether a small minority is forever to control the destiny of the United States and it is a question to which,

⁶The half brother of Rufus King and of William King, the first governor of Maine. He was no relation of the Woodmans, but was a popular public man after whom many Maine boys of that day were named.

until it is settled, all other practical questions in the United States will be subsidiary.

"You well know that I am as far as possible from being an abolitionist and that up to the time of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise I was what would be called a pro-slavery man. I was willing to stretch the Constitution a little rather than deprive the South of any rights to which by virtue thereof they were entitled. We had conceded and compromised until, in 1850, I felt that the South could ask for nothing more and that the slavery agitation was at an end.

"I did not conceive it possible that they would, even through a northern member, insult us by asking for a repeal of the Missouri Compromise. But they not only asked for but enforced it. From that moment I felt that the South contemned the kindness which I had before felt for it and in cramming the repeal of the Missouri Compromise down my throat I felt that it was wantonly injuring and insulting me. * * * I do not forget or forgive it. The South gets no more compassion from me, and another slave state would never come into the Union if I could prevent it. * * * I hope the time is not distant when the North will have the courage to say to the South—'Ye blew the fire that burnt ye, now have it ye.' Possessing these feelings I am in favor of the election of Fremont. * * * If I were at home now, I am not sure that I would not stump the district with you and give my influence, if I have any, to promote your election and that of Fremont.

"I have always been and believe that I still am a Democrat but now that the Democratic party is substantially resolved into an association for reducing the free population of the North into a servitude more ignominious than that of the black population of the South, I no longer belong to it.

"Such are my feelings and sentiments, which I would proclaim from the housetops, if I thought it would do any good."

He voted for Lincoln, and, so far as I know, for Republicans until the nomination of Samuel J. Tilden. He voted for him because he was a free trader. Later, he was a warm supporter of President Cleveland.

Mr. Woodman had no ambition for office himself, which probably accounted, in part, at least, for the fact that he was the trusted counsellor of men like C. C. Washburn, and his brother, Elihu B. Washburne,⁷ of John A. Andrew, and a personal friend of Mr. Lincoln's able secretary of the treasury, Hugh McCulloch. Mr. McCulloch was born in the same county as Mr. Woodman, in Maine, and was a prominent banker in Indiana when Mr. Woodman was a banker in

⁷ Elihu used a final "e" in his name. Cadwallader never used it.

Mineral Point. Mr. Woodman would himself have made an excellent secretary of the treasury. He was a firm believer in the gold standard and in the subtreasury. But not only did he never seek public office,—he actually went to the other extreme, declining the urgent appeals of his friends to accept nominations, and, in one instance, refusing to take a seat in the Wisconsin legislature, to which he had been nominated and elected while absent from the state. I had it from his own lips, and also from Mr. Hamilton H. Gray, of Darlington, who was a member of the committee from the district convention that waited upon Mr. Woodman and offered him the Democratic nomination for Congress in the fall of 1854, that he then refused what was thought to be an offer equivalent to an election. He declined, probably because of the views expressed in the letter above quoted, as the Missouri Compromise was an issue in the campaign, although his business commitments actually forbade, and were made the excuse for his refusal. A few days later the Whig convention offered its nomination to his partner, Mr. Washburn, who accepted and was elected. Mr. Gray expressed to me the opinion that Mr. Woodman's nomination would have assured success to the Democrats, and that Mr. Washburn would not have been a candidate.

Mr. Woodman's views of office-holding and of the proper attitude toward political preferment were expressed in the following direct and decided manner to one of his younger relatives:

"Political office seems to be very fascinating to many men, but the result is in many cases very demoralizing. I hope you will never be a seeker for office. Even if office seeks you, who are not independent, in nine cases out of ten it will be best to decline. Maintain a manly, a true but not an offensive independence, even if it should lead to sawing wood for a living. Character is worth infinitely more than money. *Be no man's man.*"

With Mr. Washburn his relations, beginning in their early business association, lasted uninterruptedly until the latter's death. Mr. Woodman was called to the bedside of his old

partner, in Philadelphia, and after counselling with him, drew the will that disposed of the Washburn estate just as the testator desired and intended, although it was strenuously contested in the Wisconsin courts. Mr. Woodman declined to be an executor, but was a trustee for some of Mr. Washburn's private bequests.

Of his boyhood friend, John A. Andrew, the famous Civil War governor of Massachusetts, with whom he kept up a life-long intimacy, he wrote to his sister the following deeply sincere and beautiful tribute:

"I have lost my oldest and nearest and dearest friend among men. It is a great affliction to me. Mother's death has been to me an ever present sorrow and so will Andrew's be. Life now becomes less joyful and death more welcome. Our acquaintance, which began at Gorham, was continued in college and afterwards in Boston, where we studied law. From the first we were friends and our friendship knew no variableness or shadow of turning. But I should not lament his death so much upon my own account as upon that of the country. He could not have remained much longer in private life. No man seemed destined to do so much good as he in the councils of the nation. The country by his death seems poorer and weaker. People were beginning to be aware that he was the foremost statesman in the country. But this great, courageous, manly soul has left us and the whole state mourns as Massachusetts never before mourned the death of any of her citizens. He was great in heart as well as in intellect, and in a simple, natural, unpretending way followed Christ more nearly than any man I have ever known."

From the early and otherwise busy days of his western life, Mr. Woodman began to gather a library of the works of the explorers of the Mississippi Valley, and to collect and save the more ephemeral literature of the time which would prove of later historical interest. As the possessor of many of the volumes that resulted from that early attention to historical details, I can testify that as early as 1844 and 1845 he was buying Carver's *Travels in Wisconsin*, Schoolcraft's *Narrative Journal of Travels * * * to the Sources of the Mississippi*, La Hontan, Hennepin, Long, and others, and that he saved *The Home of the Badgers*, and many other contemporaneous pamphlet publications of local character, now practically unobtainable. He was a constant bookbuyer

all his life, and as constant a contributor of books and papers to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. He published *The Woodmans of Buxton, Maine*, in 1874, and largely through his initiative and pecuniary assistance the history of his native town is preserved with a fullness and accuracy that is said to be unexcelled if not unequalled in all New England.

Throughout his lifetime he was steadfast in his loyalty to his kindred, in devotion to his friends, and in a deep interest in his native town. Many a person in the old town of Buxton received timely financial help in sickness, or misfortune, or was presented with a cow, or something helpful, without knowledge of the source. When he visited California he found the grave of his Wisconsin friend, Col. William S. Hamilton,⁸ neglected and unmarked; so he caused a respectable monument to be set over the grave, an iron fence built to enclose it, and had the lot put in order. When his class at Bowdoin celebrated its semicentennial, in 1886, he saw to it that every man was present, and he and they took great pleasure in the romp they had.

He made several contributions of scholarships and other assistance to Bowdoin College; he built monuments to relatives and friends, and did personal kindnesses—so many that no one now knows their number or importance, for he did not talk about them. A friend to whom I wrote for information replied:

“President Hyde told me, years ago, that some of your Uncle Cyrus’s gifts were unrecorded. He is now dead so that the facts are, very likely, forgotten as they were intended to be. I was for four years the beneficiary of the ‘Buxton Scholarship’ at Bowdoin. I might not have got through college without it, in those impecunious days, so I have a vital interest in that and allied bequests of Mr. Woodman.”

The one place where he desired to record a gift was in his endowment of the Astronomical Library, at the Washburn Observatory, now connected with the University of Wisconsin. He created this library fund, with characteristic

⁸ Son of Alexander Hamilton.

care, by a donation of \$5,000, so conditioned that but one-half of the income might be used until additions to the principal from the remaining income had built up the fund to \$100,000. When that time arrives all of the income may be spent. He wished his association with General Washburn to be perpetuated, so a bronze tablet in the library bears the record of that gift.

This method of businesslike donations of comparatively small sums, carefully fore-ordained to grow, was a distinguishing characteristic of many of his gifts. Sums of money were left in trust to provide occasional gifts, or necessary recreations, to distant relatives and I think even to old friends, and some such funds are already performing secret and grateful service in the third generation.

Perhaps this sort of thing is philanthropy, but I like to think of it as something warmer, kindlier, and more personal. It is certainly not of the self-vaunting sort and it emphasizes to one who knew the man the breadth of his democratic spirit and the warmth and steadfastness of his devotion to those he loved. These unostentatious gifts and the manner in which they were made also emphasize an underlying Puritan aversion to show and pretention that had deep root in his character. He despised sham and had contempt for all vulgar display.

His strict measure of right and wrong in business relations can be illustrated in no better way than by the statement that he never rode on a railroad pass nor permitted any member of his family to do so, although he was for a great many years among the inner circle of Boston men who controlled the finances and policies of the Michigan Southern and of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroads. The only exception he made to this rule was when he built the Plattsburgh branch of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, when he traveled on railroad business.

The simplicity of his home life reflected his quiet tastes and dislike of display. His western home in Mineral Point

was a plain, homely, wooden house, which was rather small for his growing family; to the rear of it was attached his modest business office, which fronted on the next street. The Cambridge home, of ample size, and comfortable, is situated in a narrow byway, with four near neighbors, but it makes no show. The house was filled with books, largely volumes of American history and American literature, which bespoke both his taste and his loyalty.

In a letter to me, when I was a young man, he expressed his own character and philosophy as follows:

"Be honest, be truthful, honorable, manly, charitable, and you will be rich in character if not in money. We cannot conceal ourselves, if we would, from our neighbors. They are sure to find us out and rate us at our true worth."

To the details of Mr. Woodman's active business career little attention is paid in this sketch. There are several articles of that sort.⁹ The effort here is to express the man.

Of his family, in a letter to his sister, he once said:

"Your remarks about the Woodmans are correct. They seem, generally, to think it a sin to show any affection for each other, and are perhaps unkind or thoughtless of the effect of unkind words. As I grow older I realize this more than I used to do, and can see that my manner toward my family has been too much like father's, not so warm and affectionate as it ought to be.

"I am not, I think, naturally hopeful. It is, I believe, not a Woodman trait. Nevertheless I try to cultivate hopefulness and though I do not succeed very well I yet make out in some good measure to ward off borrowed troubles.

"I have been a man of business and yet my tastes are not in that direction. It is well however that necessity has compelled me to engage in business, otherwise I might have become a misanthrope. I live in a crowd and yet I am alone."

There again speaks the Puritan, but there is another side to the picture from equally reliable authority.

As the excellent picture of Mr. Woodman opposite the title-page of this issue suggests, he was a man of good looks

⁹ See publications of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and genealogical matter in the library of the Society. Also *Bench and Bar of Wisconsin*, by Parker McCobb Reed, Milwaukee, 1882.

and dignified presence. There was a touch of the formality of an earlier generation, and of the self-respect and respect for others that is the foundation of good breeding. He was quite gray before he was fifty and white before he was sixty-five, but he never knew the infirmities of old age. Not long ago I asked his only daughter, who was, as is often the case, the father's closest confidant and fondest critic, for some definite facts as to her father's personal appearance. I received the following reply:

"Father's hair was brown, his eyes were blue. His height was 5 feet 7 inches, in his shoes, and he weighed about 160 pounds.

"I never saw father ill in bed for a day. To the last his step was light and firm, his carriage erect.

"He liked to spout verses and sing while dressing in the morning, a favorite theme was 'Consider the laylocks how they grow.' He thus declaimed in English, German and Spanish. Never in French, that I can remember.

"He was full of tease and fun at times. I have laughed myself weak over his monkey tricks.

"When he was a bit crusty he enjoyed having someone hit back. It never occurred to mother to poke fun at him, it was not in her. I succeeded fairly well.

"Father's bark was out of all proportion to his bite. He would talk about restless, uneasy women, unable to stay home, wanting to be always going somewhere. This was rather funny when he was always carting me from Dan to Beersheba.

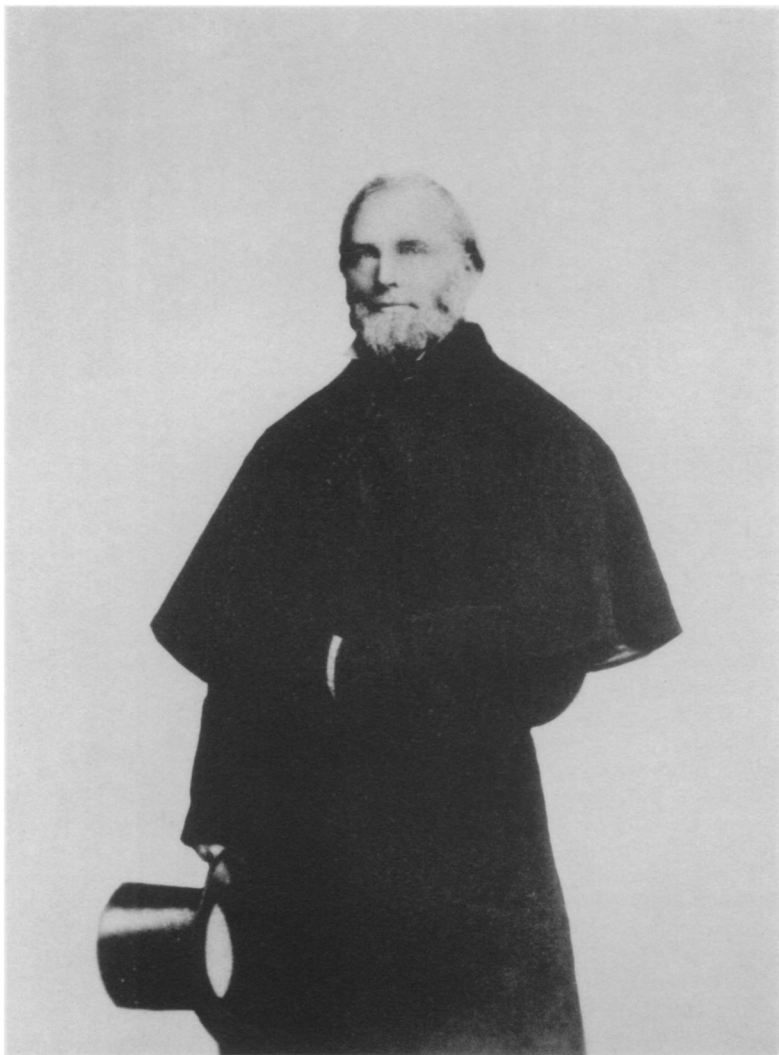
"I have no way of knowing how many people father helped, or who they were. It was not his way to care to go on record, nor to wish to have his name connected with any gift, except in the one case of the library at the Madison observatory where he made a point of having the names of Washburn and Woodman stand side by side in perpetuity; if there's any such thing as perpetuity.

"It always seemed to be somewhat remarkable that father with his robust health, should have, as he did, a most intelligent sympathy with people who were ailing and delicate. With regard to the comfort of a guest, he often thought of things which mother and I had overlooked.

"When father arrived in Illinois the men in Winslow 'sized up' the brown haired, blue eyed, pink and white young thing, as one who would quickly find life in a rough new country beyond his power of endurance.

"It was not long before they had to revise their judgments. Father could do all that they could and go them one better. He could walk farther and faster. Sleep or go without sleep, eat or fast, and hold up his end of anything with the best of them.

"A great, life-long sorrow came to father in Winslow, the death of his first son, in infancy. In my thoughts I often see the young father



CYRUS WOODMAN
From a photograph taken in 1861

standing by the grave of that idolized baby with a pain in his heart which time softened but never wholly removed.

"There seemed to be nothing too much to do for his friends."

Mr. Woodman, for years a western pioneer himself, was a descendant of the earliest pioneers of New England. He was but three generations removed from those who began life in the pine forests of Maine, axe in hand. Such as they moved first from Maine and New Hampshire to the forests of New York, next to Pennsylvania, thence to Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and still onward, across the continent, following the northern pine belt to the Pacific Ocean. Mr. Woodman was active as a participant in this movement in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, in all of which states he had at various times considerable land and lumbering interests. Wisconsin, however, was the scene of his main operations. After he had virtually retired from active business and had lived for some years in the East, he was induced to engage in lumbering in New Hampshire for a brief season, and his last investment in timber, made but a few months before his death, in 1889, was in the state of Washington, which he visited in company with the late William H. Bradley,¹⁰ of Milwaukee, and Wallace G. Collins, then an officer of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul road, in this state. These three men tramped for two or three weeks in Washington timber, and made their selections, with practiced eyes, from personal inspection. The only survivor, Mr. Collins, is now reaping the reward of New England faith in pine timber, as a successful Pacific coast lumberman. He told me that Mr. Woodman, although in his seventy-fifth year, enjoyed this tramp immensely and kept the younger men busy trying to outdo him.

Most of the hardy, northern New England blood of early Wisconsin was attracted here through the Yankee knowledge of and faith in pine timber. This was an inheritance with Mr.

¹⁰ Mr. Bradley's father, a Maine man, had been Mr. Woodman's associate in some of his Michigan enterprises; the son inherited his confidence in the father.

Woodman, whose grandfather and great-grandfather were pioneer lumbermen on the Saco River, one of the rich lumber streams of Maine. The first sawmill in Buxton Township, York County (then Narraganset No. 1) was built by his great-grandfather, Joseph Woodman, about 1750, and the first sawmill at the Bar Mills, in the same township, was built forty-five years later by his grandfather, Joseph Woodman, the second.

The progenitors of the Woodmans were settlers in Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1635, at the beginnings of that town. The neighboring dwellings of Woodman, the tanner, and Lieut. Stephen Longfellow, the blacksmith,¹¹ at last accounts were still standing. The two families were related by marriage.

Cyrus Woodman was descended from Edward Woodman, who came from England with the first settlers, and was one of the original ninety-one grantees of the town site. He was also reputed to be one of fifteen men entitled to the appellation of "Mister," or "Master," which signified a leading man; he long occupied a position of prominence in the Congregational Church and in the public affairs of this historic community. At this time public and religious affairs in a New England community were both centered in the Congregational Church. According to a biographer, he was "a man of influence, decision and energy," who made himself felt in the young community.¹² On his mother's side Mr. Woodman was descended from another and numerous Newbury family, the Coffins, and through their intermarriages he was related to the Gorham descendants of John Tilly and John Howland, Mayflower Pilgrims. So Cyrus Woodman's family and traditions rooted in the beginnings of the first New England colony. In him were combined many of the characteristics and traditions of the early, more liberal Pil-

¹¹ Progenitor of Henry W. Longfellow, the poet.

¹² Edward Woodman probably came from Corsham, a village in Wiltshire, England, and, as his name suggests, was of pure English stock.

grims and the later and stiffer-necked Puritans. His maternal grandmother, Mary Gorham,¹³ was the daughter of Captain Nathaniel Gorham, a prominent and well-to-do sea captain of Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Mary Gorham married the Rev. Paul Coffin, in 1763.¹⁴ He had graduated from Harvard College in the class of 1759, and three years later went into the wilderness of Maine to assume the pastorate of the first Congregational Church of Buxton. As a youth of twenty-three he preached there his trial sermon on February 8, 1761, the first sermon of a pastorate that began a year later and continued uninterruptedly for sixty years. He had left college distinguished for correct deportment and literary attainments, and, according to an historian of Buxton, was "a learned man, and was able to read the scriptures in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, to which he added a knowledge of French." In May, 1799, he enjoyed the privilege of preaching the annual "election sermon," in Boston, before the Honorable, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Council, Senate, and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1812 Harvard College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. The town's historian says of Dr. Coffin, that he was "born and educated in polished and literary society," and that his charge consisted of less than thirty families, most of whom lived in log houses, and were uneducated pioneers. "During eight years of the war of the Revolution he did not receive twenty dollars in specie." Dur-

¹³ Her brother, Nathaniel Gorham, was long prominent in the politics of Massachusetts colony, as legislator, delegate to the Continental Congress in 1786, and delegate from Massachusetts to the convention that framed the constitution of the United States. Here he was called, by General Washington, to occupy the chair in the committee of the whole, over the deliberations of which he presided for the entire session of three months. He was later credited with "powerful influence in securing the adoption of the constitution" in the Massachusetts convention. Later, under the Commonwealth, he was speaker of the Massachusetts house of representatives, and twice unsuccessfully contended with John Hancock for the governorship. See Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography*; also Max Farrand, *Records of the Federal Convention*, III, 87.

¹⁴ Her brother, John, a physician of standing in Boston, was Paul Coffin's classmate and friend in Harvard College.

ing these years he supported himself and family from his farm.

As is often the case, the historians of Buxton have been inclined to emphasize the illiterate character of pioneer settlements. But the people of Buxton were generally of the intelligent stock of Old Newbury, and their separation from that center had not been long nor absolute. They were living remote from towns and educational advantages, but that they were ignorant is not borne out by the records.

Mineral Point, in 1845, and during the eleven years that Mr. Woodman lived there, was a lead mining center, and all of the southwestern corner of the state was a busy and typical mining camp. However, Mr. Woodman was not isolated among rough and uneducated people, though then as always in frontier settlements the man of education and cultivation was in the minority. But among Mr. Woodman's townspeople and comparatively near neighbors were such men as Gen. William R. Smith, son of a distinguished clergyman and educator of Pennsylvania; Col. William S. Hamilton, the son of Alexander Hamilton, patriot of the Revolution; Judge Charles Dunn, first chief justice of the territorial supreme court; Cadwallader C. Washburn; Moses M. Strong, George W. Lakin, and others. Elihu B. Washburne, Judge Thomas Drummond, of Galena, a graduate of Gorham Academy and of Bowdoin College, and others of education and wide and cosmopolitan experience were near at hand. Notwithstanding Mr. Woodman's assertion—"I live in a crowd and yet I am alone," I know from men like the late Montgomery Smith and Calvert Spensley, of Mineral Point, who were younger, but remembered him well, that he was highly respected and fully appreciated. Mineral Point was then a community into which drifted many adventurous spirits from all parts of this country and Europe. Mr. Woodman found among them companions who were his peers in education and taste for refined pursuits, and made ac-

quaintances who remained his friends through life. He cheerfully lived the life that circumstances demanded. He once told me that in the course of various business trips he had covered the ground on horseback from Black River Falls to St. Louis, had slept many a night in the open, using his saddle for a pillow, and had also slept in the logging camps, in below zero weather, where everybody put his blanket on the floor and his feet toward the fire.

When Gen. W. R. Smith completed the third volume of his *History of Wisconsin*, in 1854, the first documents quoted were the "Jesuit Relations" and a footnote on page 9, at the beginning of these quotations, signed "C. W.," is evidence that Mr. Woodman, who visited Boston frequently, had, at the Harvard College Library, made the translations of matter pertaining to Wisconsin, of which General Smith thus made use and acknowledgment.

An unfinished autobiography, addressed "To My Children," upon which he was at work at the time of his death, begins as follows:

"It would be a great satisfaction to me if I knew something more than I do of the youthful days of my parents. I should like to know how their lives were spent under the paternal roof and before I can remember them. I should like to know what work they did, and what amusements and what companions they had, what schools they attended and the general courses of life in their younger days.

"My parents were born within about a half mile of each other and doubtless went to the same common school, but their lives before they were married are almost a blank to me. There is much that I should be glad to know of them in their early days which never can be known. The strong desire which I have to know more about them than I do leads me to think that the time may come when my children will be pleased to know something of my own youthful days."

Unfortunately this sketch concludes at the time he was in Bowdoin College, so it is concerned chiefly with the home life of a young man who worked on his father's small farm, and whose college career had to be interrupted so that he might teach school to help pay his college expenses, for his father had other children to educate.

His father, Joseph Woodman, the third, had attended Fryeburg (Maine) and the famous Phillips Exeter Academies; later he studied law in the offices of leading lawyers of Maine, was admitted to the bar in 1809, and settled as a practitioner in his native town. He was fairly prosperous. A grievous loss, the death of his wife, in 1833, left him with a family of four sons, the eldest of whom was Cyrus, the subject of this sketch, then almost nineteen years of age, and a daughter, the youngest, nine years of age.¹⁵ He soon gave up active practice, and three years later came west, thereafter to make his home chiefly with his son Cyrus, with occasional lengthy visits to his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac L. Usher, at Onalaska, La Crosse County, Wisconsin. He died in London, Canada, November 25, 1857, at the age of seventy-four.

Of his mother the autobiography of the son relates that she went to a private school in Cambridge and says:

"Her education was doubtless mostly at home, but it was, in my judgment, of the very best kind. She had the instruction and discipline of intelligent, cultivated and pious parents, she had the advantage of mingling with brothers as well as sisters, of seeing the best company at her father's house and in the neighboring towns,¹⁶ of visiting relatives in Newburyport, Boston, and other places in Massachusetts, where she had access to the best society for the improvement of mind and manners;¹⁷

¹⁵ His second son, William Henry, became a lawyer in New York City. The third son, George, attended Phillips Andover Academy and later studied law but never practiced. For many years he was the active manager of the private banking house of C. & G. Woodman, on Pine Street, New York City, of which his brother Cyrus was the larger owner, but personally inactive. Horatio, youngest of the four, practiced law in Boston. He had literary tastes and ability and Edward Waldo Emerson, in his recent volume on *The Early Years of the Saturday Club*, credits him with organizing it. Its early membership included Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes, and Whittier, and it still includes leading scholars, literary and professional men of Boston, Cambridge, and vicinity.

¹⁶ In his autobiography Mr. Woodman says that, returning from a visit to Boston with his mother, "We drove to the house of Peter C. Brooks, and there dined," in Medford. A daughter, Mrs. Edward Everett, was present, another daughter, who was then engaged to Charles Francis Adams, whom she later married. Another daughter married the Rev. Nathaniel L. Frothingham. Through Mrs. Woodman's Gorham relationship to Mrs. Brooks, who was her cousin, and a similar relationship to the Phillips family of Andover, in whose family George Woodman was welcome when he attended the Academy, Bishop Phillips Brooks of Boston, was also a relative.

¹⁷ "Alice Morse Earle's *Diary of Anna Green Winslow, of 1771-1773*, gives account of the girls' parties given by Hannah Soley, of Charlestown, Massachusetts, who was a first cousin of Mrs. Woodman's mother, which suggests the social relations of the Gorhams and Coffins of that early day.

and last but not least, she had the advantage of being brought up on a farm where she was obliged to practice economy and to learn all the work which the wives of farmers performed in those days. It was a school under the best of influences, of industry, economy and usefulness. On the whole, I think that there is no better education for a woman than that which my mother received. What better education could she have had for married life and for the varied duties incumbent upon her as a member of society?"

Mr. Woodman married on January 5, 1842, at Fremont, Illinois, Miss Charlotte Flint, of Baldwin, Maine, daughter of Deacon Ephraim Flint, a prominent citizen of that place. Mr. Woodman had made the acquaintance of his wife when he taught school in Baldwin, in his college days. She was a woman of character and ability, whose management of her household was of great assistance in the early days of Mr. Woodman's life in the West. A brother, Thompson Flint, and a cousin, Daniel Thompson, were pioneer grain and elevator men in Chicago, and achieved decided success.

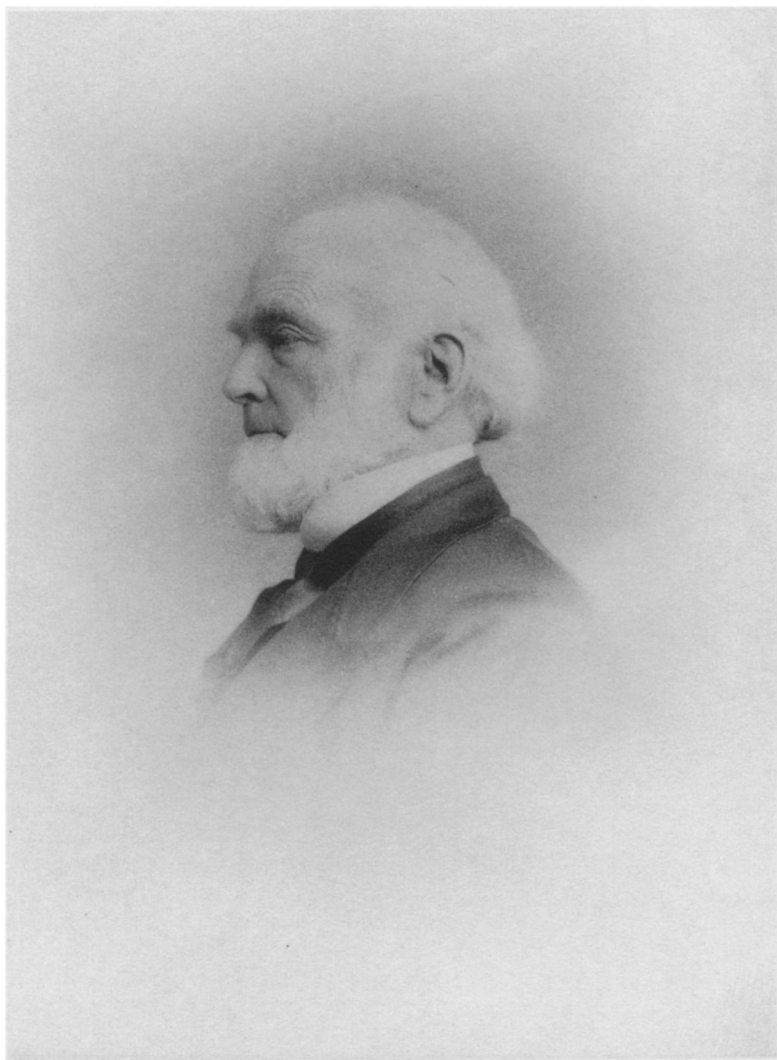
This is not intended to be a mere eulogium. Rather it is an attempt to arrange, in proper perspective, Mr. Woodman's relations to Wisconsin, so that the future historian may consider and interpret the Woodman papers, in the hands of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, with a clearer idea of the man whose labors they represent.

The attention given to Mr. Woodman's family history is not justified upon its personal importance but because the future historian must have such details if he is to give Wisconsin's historical landscape an intelligent and suitable perspective. Mr. Woodman was not a rare nor singular exception. He was one of many strong, capable, educated men of English descent and New England antecedents, who were potent as good citizens of pioneer Wisconsin. Such men, with traditions of more than eight centuries of British freedom, shaped Wisconsin's constitution and laws in the likeness of New York, whose early constitutional mentor had been Massachusetts, the American state which will, next year,

celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the planting of free representative government upon her soil, at Plymouth.

That was a sowing which has borne the matchless harvest of this hemisphere—a hemisphere without a king, from the Arctic to the Antarctic Pole. Today this event at Plymouth is reacting upon Europe and all the peoples of the globe, touching them with aspirations for freedom and self-government.

Wisconsin history will not be properly interpreted without recognition of this powerful influence during her formative period.



CYRUS WOODMAN
From a photograph taken in 1886